



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

## Helping to heal

Maj. Joe Johnson, with brigade surgeon for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, treats a patient during a joint U.S. - Iraqi medical operation in Sadr City, Baghdad March 17. (See story page 4)

# Brigade's nerve center gets facelift

By Spc. Chris McCann  
2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - When people think of a deployment to Iraq, they may imagine sand-filled tents and crude buildings on American posts. Sometimes, that mental image is right, but sometimes it isn't.

The Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), assisted by local Iraqi

builders and civilian contractors, have revamped their brigade's tactical operations center at Camp Striker, Iraq over the seven months they have been in the country.

When the brigade arrived in September of 2006, the operation center was housed in two separate buildings, simple structures of two-by-fours and plywood, unpainted and with a rough concrete floor. By December, the floor was tiled, the walls boasted a carpet wainscoting and

subtle wallpaper, and framed photographs and captured weapons decorated the hallways.

Over the last few weeks, the Soldiers of the brigade have put in overtime, pouring concrete, building walls and roofs, and painting to join the buildings. While civilians have put in time doing the lion's share of outdoor painting, much of the work is

See **Nerve** Page 2

# Brigade headquarters finally looks like it should

## Nerve

From Page 1

done by Soldiers.

Sgt. Tony Fusco, the assistant brigade engineer and a native of Avon, N.Y., has been working on the center for several weeks.

"The way it looked before was plain. Now it looks a lot more like a brigade headquarters should," he said.

Fusco, who says he has been doing carpentry and construction since he was nine years old, helped build walls and the front porch for the TOC as well as doing trim work and other carpentry.

"The Soldiers are motivated, and they're working together well," said Sgt. Jason Carvel, a native of DeKalb Junction, N.Y., a dismount with the brigade's personal security detachment, as he assisted his Soldiers moving sandbags and rocks. "They're motivated because they want the job done quickly, but done well and to standard. And it's fun for both of our patrols to work together. It makes me feel good to see all of them so motivated."

Sgt. Joshua May, a driver with the personal security detachment, stood

on a ladder painting the tops of the walls.

The entrance of the TOC was moved to another side of the building, putting a nicer face on the headquarters.

"It's a one-hundred-percent improvement in terms of image," said translator Frank Oraha, who was born and raised in southern Iraq but immigrated to the United States in 1966. He has served in the TOC for almost three years, as three units have moved in and out. "The previous units didn't project an image like this. It gives the image of a professional headquarters."

"Col. Ali (Jassim Muhammad Al-Frejee, commander of the 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division) commented on it to me, because he had been here before. He was flabbergasted, said it was a night-and-day improvement - and that was before the new construction. He only saw the neatness of it, the tiled floor and the paint, the photos on the walls and the mural."

"It's always kept presentable for guests, to present a good image," said Oraha.

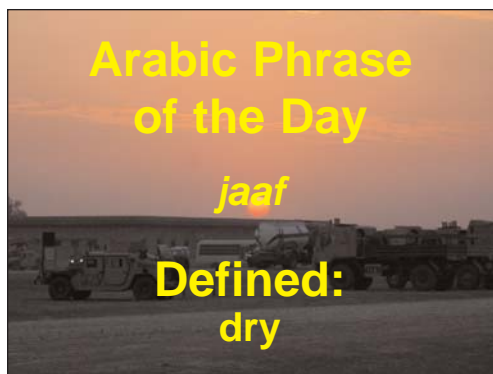
"I like that they're integrating all the things they're doing in sector with what we do here," said 1st Lt. Amber Ryder,



(Photo by Spc. Chris McCann 2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs)

**Spc. Roland Brown (left), who serves on the 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., and Spc. Tung Nguyen, a medic with the PSD, paint exterior trim on the brigade's TOC on Camp Striker, Iraq, March 15.**

deputy brigade personnel officer, and a native of Kalamazoo, Mich., of the photographs that line the walls. "We're showing the success of the guys who are out there doing the hard work."



## Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 70  
Low: 45



Tomorrow

High: 73  
Low: 48



Wednesday

High: 77  
Low: 50

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(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Keith Laird 2-1 Inf. Public Affairs)

**Lt. Col. Gregory D. Gadson, Commander, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery, attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, and Command Sgt. Maj. William Huffin uncased the battalion colors March 15, at the transfer of authority ceremony held on Camp Liberty, Iraq.**

## Fresh troops assume battle space

**1st Lt Charles Bloomfield  
2-32 Field Artillery Regiment**

BAGHDAD-Fresh troops have arrived in western Baghdad and have assumed control in their area of operations.

2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, the 'Proud Americans,' officially assumed responsibility for operations March 15, during a transfer of authority ceremony held on Camp Liberty, Iraq.

This is the first time the Proud Americans uncased their colors in a combat zone since the unit departed Vietnam in 1971.

Lt. Col. Gregory Gadson, Commander of 2nd Battalion, 32nd

Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, gave a motivational speech during the ceremony. He touched upon the progress the unit has made since receiving a change of mission from its traditional field artillery role, to mounted and dismounted infantry operations in western Baghdad.

"I am truly amazed at the transformation the Proud Americans have made over the past four months," he said. "As recently as October, 2006, we were manning our howitzers and providing fires for the Dragon Brigade; now we are poised for a new mission in west Baghdad and we are honored to serve with the Dagger Brigade, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division."

## Baghdad in Brief

### Cav troops find weapons cache, detain two

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers discovered a weapons cache March 16 north of the Iraqi capital.

They also detained two men in connection with the find.

While on a combat patrol troopers from the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment discovered a buried blue plastic container containing a cache.

The cache included one 155 mm artillery round, one 120 mm mortar round, 25 blasting caps, six AK-47 magazines with armor-piercing ammunition, 240 shotgun flares, one flak vest and two items used for the detonation of improvised explosive devices.

Soldiers subsequently detained two suspected insurgents, one of whom tested positive for the handling of explosive materials.

The incident is under investigation, and the men are being held for further questioning.

### Paratroopers find large weapon cache

ISKANDARIYAH, Iraq - Paratroopers from Company D, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division discovered a weapons cache March 18 south of Baghdad.

While on patrol, the Paratroopers discovered the cache which consisted of 400 tank rounds, 50 130mm mortars and three 60 mm mortars.

The cache was secured, the site was marked and an explosive ordnance disposal team was notified for the demolition of the cache.

# Sadr City residents receive medical assistance

By Sgt. Mike Pryor  
2-82 Abn. Public Affairs

SADR CITY, Baghdad - It was a hectic day for personnel inside the clinic in this desperately poor neighborhood. In classrooms converted into treatment rooms, Iraqi and U.S. medics attended to a constant stream of patients, from white-bearded old men to babies only a few months old. They spent much of the day dispensing Tylenol and antibiotics for colds, fevers, viruses, infections, and other simple ailments. Other cases were more severe. In a few heart-breaking instances, parents entered the rooms cradling crippled or blind children, their eyes pleading for a magic cure.

This was the scene as Iraqi and U.S. forces turned a Sadr City schoolhouse into a makeshift medical clinic March 17 providing much-needed medical assistance to residents of one of Baghdad's most impoverished districts.

The day-long medical operation was the first large-scale humanitarian aid project conducted in Sadr City since coalition and Iraqi



(Photos by Sgt. Mike Pryor 2-82 Abn. Public Affairs)

**Maj. Charles Neal, the Battalion Surgeon for 2nd Bn., 325th Abn. Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., and Khuder Abbas, Brigade Surgeon for 8th Bde., 2nd INP Div., prepare a prescription for a young man they treated during a joint U.S. - Iraqi medical operation in Sadr City, Baghdad March 17.**

security forces entered the area weeks ago as part of the overall effort to improve security in Iraq's capital.

The medical operation came at a time when coalition and Iraqi forces in Sadr City are beginning to transition from purely security-focused operations to projects providing the people with essential services, said Lt. Col. Richard Kim, commander of a battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team based in the area.

"This shows that the government can not only protect the people, but also provide the services they need," Kim said.

The unit treated 453 people, including 153 women and 122 children, during the operation. Residents turned out in droves for the event, forming a line stretching around the block outside the schoolhouse-turned-clinic.

The patients seemed to appreciate the medics' efforts, said Sgt. Sunde Douglas, from Victoria, Va., an X-ray technician with Co. C, 407th BSB.

"They all seemed really happy we were here, and most of them would say 'thank you' and shake your hand," Douglas said.

Iraqi police from the 8th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division provided the bulk of the security for the operation. The policemen moved through the crowd outside, causing mini-riots as they distributed bags full of toys and soccer balls to the neighborhood children. They also provided medical person-

nel to help with treatment inside.

"Of all the medical operations I've been on, this one has had the most Iraqi involvement," said Maj. John Bride of Westwood, Mass., battalion surgeon for the 407th BSB.

In one room, medical officer Maj. Charles Neal, of San Antonio, Texas, and Khuder Abbas, the 8-2 INP's brigade surgeon, spent the day treating patients together. They managed to find a rhythm, despite not being able to speak the same language.

As Abbas examined one boy, he communicated symptoms to Neal by hand signals. When he was finished, Abbas turned to Neal. They had both reached the same conclusion about the treatment the boy would need.

"Doxycycline," Abbas and Neal said simultaneously.

Neal and Abbas, like the other medics, continued to treat patients until late in the afternoon, when the supplies had run out and the schoolhouse was piled high with empty packages of medicine and drugs. Then they began packing up to leave.

As the schoolhouse started to clear out, an officer from the Iraqi police stared out the window at the crowd that was still gathered three and four-deep outside. The operation had gone well, he said, but there was still much more work to do in Sadr City.

"The people have been with us since we started the new security plan," he said, "now the government has to show results."



**Staff Sgt. Steven McDonald, a civil affairs medic with HHC, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., and Pvt. April Stamper, a medic with Co. C, 407th BSB, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., treat an Iraqi woman's sick baby during a joint U.S. - Iraqi medical operation in Sadr City, Baghdad March 17.**



# National Police abilities, tasks grow daily

By Staff Sgt. Todd Phipps  
2-10 Mtn.

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - The Iraqi National Police are shouldering more responsibility all around the country as the Iraqi government becomes more stable, and taking charge of security with the Iraqi army in areas hard-hit by violence.

Soldiers from Troop C, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) has taken notice of the responsibilities of the National Police and helped them integrate into the troop's area of operations.

To effectively patrol and secure their ever-expanding area on their own is the ultimate goal for the 2nd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, but that can't happen without the local village having faith in the police to accomplish their mission.

The NPs show a strong desire to learn from and work with coalition forces, say the Soldiers of the troop, and this translates into better performance and a willingness to help secure local towns as well as key roads.

A recent joint operation - clearing an area north of the old Al-Dhour military compound Feb. 17 - demonstrated the growth of the police competence and abilities, and 1st Lt. Andrew Kimes, a native of Fostoria, Ohio, and a platoon leader with Troop C, found the progress notable.

"It's evident the NPs are making headway," Kimes said. "We have to give less guidance now than before."

This rise in competence is



(U.S. Army photo)

**Sgt. Gilbert Sanchez (right), a native of Bakersfield, Calif., who serves as a dismount with and of the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), and National Police troops with the 2nd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, patrol the streets of the village of Koresh, Iraq recently.**

a result of the national policemen's desire to work with the troop and the Marine Corps' National Police training team. NP elements, mentored by the National Police Transition Team, create tactical check points almost daily. They also conduct joint operations, such as the entry and search operations and patrols of the villages within the troop's area of operations.

"They are more disciplined and more active than before," said Pfc. Victor Montano-Urbe, a native of Huron, Calif., who serves as a cavalry scout with Troop C.

The increase in motivation led to an NP presence during several civil-military operation initiatives recently - such as the Mustafar town hall meeting in November and the medical assistance visits and town hall

meetings in Hilla-Koresh over the winter.

The increase in police presence in the area and their concern for the locals lifts the confidence of the villages in their government and in the local Iraqi security forces. Recently, coalition patrols observed Iraqi soldiers and police in Mustafar playing soccer with the local children.

The forces' competence and acceptance by local villages was strongly demonstrated when coalition forces, NPs, Iraqi soldiers and Iraqi government officials attended the Hilla-Koresh town hall meeting Feb. 23.

During the meeting, several concerns were expressed, including security in the area. The executive officer of 2/7/2 NP expressed to the townspeople that the NPs are ready and

willing to provide assistance. The residents requested police presence within their village and assistance to secure a safe route to the local market.

These requests indicate the local populace, although mostly Sunni, are beginning to embrace the care and concern shown by the mostly Shia police force. Non-sectarian relationships are critical to improving the security of greater Baghdad.

"The NPs are doing an outstanding job," said Sgt. 1st Class David Richardson, a platoon sergeant with the troop, and a native of Cincinnati, Ohio.

"The more time they spend in the villages, the more they become familiar with the locals, and vice versa. The key to success is constant presence," he said.